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Diana T Fritz 03/21/2007 05:40:41 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

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SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

June 14, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 2861 - UNKNOWN)
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PARM, ETTTC
Captions: None
Subject: SCENESETTER FOR UNDERSECRETARY BOLTON'S VISIT TO THE
UAE
Ref: None

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 02861

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: POL
INFO: RSO AMB DCM P/M ECON

DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MMWAHBA
DRAFTED: POL:STWILLIAMS
CLEARED: A/DCM:TEWILLIAMS; DCG:RGOLSON

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RHEHNSC RUEAIIA RHEFDIA
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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0420
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 0055
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 1270
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//OSD/NESA//
RUCAACC/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//POLAD/CCJ2/CCJ5//
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 002861

SIPDIS

NOFORN

CAIRO AND RIYADH PLEASE PASS U/S BOLTON PARTY

NSC FOR THEROUX

DOD FOR OSD/ISA/NESA

STATE FOR T, NEA/ARP, AND NEA/NGA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/14/13
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PARM](#) [ETTC](#) [IR](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR UNDERSECRETARY
BOLTON'S VISIT TO THE UAE

¶1. (U) Classified by Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba for reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

¶2. (S) Secretary Bolton: Your visit to the UAE will provide an excellent opportunity to discuss our concerns about Iran with the UAEG. We have secured a meeting with de facto Foreign Minister, Shaykh Hamdan bin Zayid Al-Nahyan, who has primary responsibility for the UAE's bilateral relationship with Iran. Unfortunately, Armed Forces Chief of Staff LTG Shaykh Muhammad bin Zayid Al-Nahyan (with whom you recently met in Washington) will not be in the UAE at the time of your visit. We have also scheduled a meeting with the Executive Director of Dubai Ports and Custom Authority, Sultan bin Sulayem. Bin Sulayem is our primary interlocutor on Dubai-related exports controls issues.

IRAN

¶3. (S/NF) The UAE has long viewed Iran as a far greater threat to its existence than that posed by Iraq. With a small national population (between 600-700,000 Emirati citizens), ten percent of the world's oil reserves and among the region's most developed economies, the UAE's vulnerabilities are not inconsiderable. Chief of Staff Shaykh Muhammad bin Zayid, in a June 11 meeting, briefed me that in the recently held GCC Intelligence Chief's semi-annual meeting, there was consensus that with Saddam's regime removed, the primary threat in the region is Iran. The Emiratis have viewed with alarm Iran's nuclear and WMD-collection effort and have offered to work with us to coordinate on intelligence-collection efforts.

¶4. (S) The combination of Iran's robust illicit arms collection effort and increasing domestic instability has greatly unsettled the Emiratis. De facto FM Hamdan told me June 11 that the UAEG has determined that Khatami -- in whom they held great hopes -- has been completely sidelined by the hardliners. Hamdan shared that it is now President Zayid's view that the Iranian leadership writ large cannot be trusted. For the UAE, this has translated into a major setback in the resolution of their dispute with Tehran over Iran's occupation of three islands in the Gulf claimed by the UAE. Hamdan had personally invested time and prestige -- making several journeys to Tehran -- to hammer out a resolution on the largest of the three islands, Abu Musa. At one point last year, Hamdan believed that a resolution was close and had extended, on behalf of President Zayid, an invitation to Khatami to visit the UAE. Those efforts now appear to have been for naught, though Khatami's invitation still stands. On June 11, Hamdan briefed that relations have soured to the point that the Iranians have arrested an Emirati national of Iranian origins on espionage charges. This despite, in Hamdan's words, the "hundreds of Iranian agentsz' the UAEG knows are operating in the UAE.

¶5. (C) Despite the UAE's strained political relationship with Iran, bilateral trade ties are strong and growing. The number one destination for goods transshipped through Dubai is Iran, and the UAE is a major destination for Iranian agricultural and mass produced consumer products. Abu Dhabi shares production from an off-shore oil field with Iran, and monthly consultative meetings proceed cordially regardless of political developments. Nonetheless, Abu Dhabi's political concerns regarding Iran led to the decision to develop the multi-billion dollar Dolphin project to pipe natural gas to the UAE from Qatar -- despite the fact that Iranian gas sources would certainly have

been cheaper, particularly for the northern Emirates (including Dubai). Business may be business, but clearly there are limits (especially for Abu Dhabi), and particularly when it comes to sensitive national security items like fuel for the UAE's massive power and water sector.

IRANIAN MEDDLING IN IRAQ

¶16. (S) The Emiratis have also expressed grave concern about what they believe is outright Iranian meddling in the internal affairs of Iraq. The Emiratis would like to see a democratic process unfold in the post-Saddam era, one in which all of Iraq's ethnic and religious elements are represented. They fear that Iranian intervention, particularly via the Badr Corps, may tip the scales in favor of those advocating a Shi'a/Iranian-style theocracy.

GETTING TO YES ON AN ARTICLE 98 AGREEMENT

¶17. (C) Hamdan is committed to finalizing an Article 98 agreement with us, preferably via the exchange of diplomatic notes. We have traded suggestions on language and are working through the often laborious UAE interagency process to schedule a video teleconference with PM/B. While we had hoped to have an agreement ready for signature by the end of June, it now appears that an early fall signing ceremony is more likely. I recommend that you use your meeting with Hamdan to press him on the need for an early closure of this issue.

EXPORT CONTROLS

¶18. (C) The UAE political leadership is strongly committed to working with us on export control issues and fully recognizes that this is a top bilateral priority. Internal bureaucratic wrangling at the federal level over which Ministry should take the lead on this issue has now been resolved in favor of the Ministry of Interior. A USG interagency team is visiting the UAE June 14-16 to relaunch our comprehensive "road map" of export controls and border security training programs, and has found strong support at the federal level both at the MFA and Interior Ministry. The Dubai Ports and Customs Authority (DPA, which runs Jebel Ali and Port Rashid, together the 12th largest port in the world) has separately indicated its interest in working with us directly on EXBS issues, particularly enforcement, and DPA is also pursuing participation in Homeland Security's Container Security Initiative (CSI).

¶19. (U) This cable was coordinated with Amconsul Dubai.

WAHBA